



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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WEEKLY WEST NILE VIRUS UPDATE Another Dead Bird Found With Virus in San Diego

County Vector Control officials announced today that a Steller's Jay found in Julian on August 29th tested positive for West Nile virus, bringing San Diego County's West Nile virus count to 19 dead birds and 2 horses.

"We are now in the peak mosquito season. We want to stress the importance of eliminating mosquito-breeding sources, and reporting dead birds to the Vector Control program," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health.

The County's West Nile virus website, www.SDFightTheBite.com, has a very comprehensive mosquito prevention checklist that includes a list of common items that can become a mosquito-breeding sources. Residents are urged to check their property weekly to ensure that water is not collecting in their yards. Larger water sources such as horse troughs, decorative fountains, ponds and inoperable swimming pools can be stocked with fish that eat mosquito larvae before they hatch into biting adults that can carry disease. These fish are available free of charge at 11 locations around the county. Check the website for locations.

Vector Control continues to pick up and test crows, ravens, jays, hawks, owls, and falcons to monitor the spread of the virus. The public is encouraged to report dead birds if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours; do not have a foul odor; are not covered with ants or flies; are not stiff; and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals. Placing a bag of ice over the bird will help to preserve it until Vector Control staff can collect the specimen for testing. All other dead birds should be placed in a plastic bag and discarded in a covered trash can. While you cannot get West Nile virus from dead birds, wear disposable gloves if you must handle birds.

You can protect yourself from the virus by: staying inside at dawn and dusk; wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors; and by using an insect repellent containing DEET when you must be outdoors. Keep screens on doors and windows and make sure they are in good repair.

For more information on West Nile virus, or to report mosquito breeding sites or dead birds please call the County of San Diego Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636).

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